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Indigenous Practices of Human Resource Management in Ancient Nuwarakalaviya



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Abstract

In the recent past an increasing interest was emerged in exploring indigenous knowledge with a view to utilize the local wisdom in the present systems. But in Sri Lanka only a few couples of researches have been carried out to explore the native wisdom in the field of management. Sri Lanka is a country which has a proud history of thousands of years. But today it lags behind many developed countries in the world. Since the indigenous management practices are more familiar within the socio-cultural environment of the country, appropriate utilization of these local concepts and ideologies will support to achieve a reliable sustainability in successful management. This study basically tries to fill this gap, exploring the indigenous practices of managing human resource in ancient Nuwarakalaviya.

With the review of literature it was decided to select three important HRM functions i.e. job design, supervisory practices and reward allocation to study. A pilot survey was carried out to gather basic understanding for developing the conceptual framework of the study. Based on the results of pilot study the research was planned around three dimensions; allocation of work, execution of authority and deployment of resources. The population for the present study consisted of persons who are well aware about the ancient systems, methods, customs and conventions. The data collection was done using both primary and secondary data where primary data collection was commenced with fifteen initiating points and the sample was expanded following snow ball method. Final sample consisted of 152 knowledgeable persons who represented different geographical localities of the area. All the data gathered were qualitative. Data analysis was mainly based on grounded theory method. Categorization, comparison, coding memoing and event analysis were the supportive tools used in data analysis.

Allocation of work in the ancient society was totally based on the caste system. In addition several other customs and conventions have been followed in agriculture and irrigation related work. Power structure of the area had two sources; the formal government headed by the king of the country and the authority of petty informal chieftains recognized by the government. Major resources identified were land and water which were administered carefully for maximum utilization. Job design in the ancient area of Nuwarakalaviya could be identified with the features of Division of labour & specialization, Balanced autonomy, Task identity, Task significance, Low task/ skill variety, Less job complexity and Task interdependence. Delegation of authority, Strong shared values, Voluntary acceptance, Recognition for informal groups and natural leaders, Participatory decision making, Mutual trust and Caring leadership were identified as prominent aspects of supervisory practices.

Within the reward allocation practices Long term orientation, Sustainability, Mutual trust & benefits, Feeling of ownership & entrepreneurship, Collective ownership, responsibility and accountability, Team based nature and Reuse of resources and reliability of organizational inputs supply were identified as important values and applications.

*Thank you ...
for inspiring me ...
to go in search of knowledge ...
through your thinking and wisdom ...
and continued to be stay behind ...
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through your endless supports
and invaluable encouragements ...
for my efforts ...
guiding me ... Directing me ...
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